



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE FPS INTELLIGENCE BRANCH AND TWO ICE AGENTS AWARDED FOR THEIR LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON, DC— The Justice Department has issued awards to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Federal Protective Service (FPS) Intelligence Branch and to two special agents from ICE's Office of Investigations for their outstanding law enforcement efforts in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

The ICE employees received their awards on May 12 at the twenty-fifth annual United States Attorney Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony, which was sponsored by Kenneth L. Wainstein, United States Attorney for the District of Columbia.

The FPS Intelligence Branch in Washington, D.C. received a Certificate of Appreciation for its anti-terrorism efforts, in conjunction with the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Law Enforcement Liaison & Support Unit, and the United States Capitol Police Intelligence Section, in creating a highly-effective information sharing network.

William Bonk, Division Director, Threat Management at FPS, along with Bill Benner Assistant Director, Law Enforcement Liaison & Support, TSA have developed dissemination exchange networks that ensure our law enforcement communities receive, in a timely manner, the most updated criminal and terrorism related intelligence.

On a daily basis, analysts within the Washington Metropolitan area and throughout the United States review hundreds of crime reports, terrorism intelligence reports, media reports and many other intelligence related reports. It is their goal to ensure that the most meaningful information is distributed within their law enforcement communities

In addition, FPS participates in a weekly Chief's Conference Telephone Call coordinated by Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority Police Department that includes chiefs of police and law enforcement executives from virtually all of the law enforcement agencies in the Washington Metropolitan area. These calls are designed to inform and advise the participants of a variety of

information including, but not limited to information related to the coordination of major demonstrations, training opportunities and terrorism-related matters.

After the terror attacks of 9/11, the Attorney General requested that U.S. Attorneys encourage law enforcement agencies within their respective Districts to create mechanisms to ensure the prompt exchange of critical information.

U.S. Attorney Wainstein recognized that the FPS Intelligence Branch and the other two law enforcement components, “with very little prompting and limited resources, created an information sharing network exchange that ensured the Attorney General’s challenge was accomplished.”

ICE Senior Special Agent Mark Leeper and ICE Special Agent Heath Simon received their awards from U.S. Attorney Wainstein as a result of their efforts in dismantling a major fraudulent document ring in Washington, D.C. that resulted in criminal guilty pleas by a dozen defendants.

For the past several years, Agents Leeper and Simon have been instrumental in investigating and combating the sale of illegal identity documents on Columbia Road, NW, in the Adams Morgan area. During that time, they have arrested numerous members of several organizations that sell fake social security cards, resident alien card (commonly known as “green cards,”) and employment authorization cards. These illegal identity cards are bought and sold primarily by illegal immigrants from other countries who purchase the cards to use as identification, and to present as proof that they are authorized to live and work in the United States.

On June 23, 2004, Agents Leeper and Simon, with the assistance of agents from the FBI, Social Security Administration, Metropolitan Police Department and other law enforcement agencies, shut down a “document mill” where illegal identity documents were being manufactured. They also arrested more than 20 illegal aliens from Mexico who were making the documents and selling the documents on Columbia Road.

When agents executed a search warrant at the house they had identified as the document mill, they recovered 678 blank fraudulent social security card; 187 blank fraudulent resident alien cards; 249 resident alien card laminates; 1,066 blank fraudulent employment authorization cards; 1,149 employment authorization laminates; and 21 sets of completed false social security cards and resident alien cards that were ready for delivery to customers.

In order to identify the individuals were involved in making and selling the documents, Agents Leeper and Simon conducted undercover surveillance, and used other investigative techniques, over a period of several months. Eventually, twelve of the individuals who were arrested were indicted on various criminal offenses. Each defendant eventually pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to possess and sell illegal identity documents. They received sentences ranging from 10 to 24 months incarceration. Each will be deported to Mexico at the conclusion of their sentence.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.